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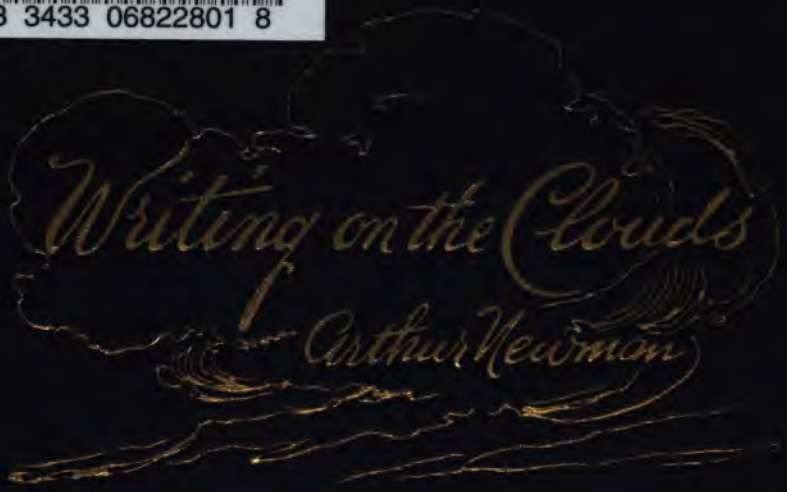

WRITING ON THE CLOUDS

BY

ARTHUR NEWMAN

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1910

J.M.D.

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FOREWORD

Ad majorem gloriam Dei.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

Thus the Apostle John begins a letter to his fellow believers and to his fellowmen, knowing that to a word thus attested they would give heed.

We ourselves listen when one sincerely and out of a full heart tries to tell, though with stammering speech, what great things he has found to help in God's word, and in the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

A. N.

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I

WRITING ON THE CLOUDS

United States Signal Service men accomplished a remarkable feat when from a mountain peak in Colorado they sent a message which was read by observers on a mountain summit in Utah, one hundred and eighty-three miles away. By means of a mirror sunlight was flashed upon the clouds in the code signals sent thus because, by reason of the curvature of the earth, the peaks were mutually invisible.

In a striking way this becames typical of much of our best service to our fellow men. Many things we do for them which we can see them receive, enjoy and profit by. But our highest ministries are as these writings on the clouds, for their effect we do not at the time behold. The religious teacher when he speaks to his hearers; the statesman addressing his fellow citizens; a teacher facing a class; the parent counselling a child; the pages sent forth from the printing press; these are as messages on the clouds, for we know not whether our words are noticed, and if heeded, whether these are understood and will avail. As a rule we talk and write by faith, not by sight.

The light used in the manner referred to was mirrored not manufactured by man. We come

to know that this also is typical. Original thought is very rare. We are transmitters not originators of ideas, plagiarists although unconsciously. It is interesting to trace the history of inventions, and see how these have been anticipated, and to follow back the course of an idea or a phrase. We are continually repeating what others have said or written and which has impressed itself on our mind. Even in the highest realm this is true. "Let your light shine before men," said Jesus, but it was reflected light, not originating in them, for beholders would glorify the Father.

It is worth our while to remember this. For when we have yielded to the instinctive impulse to speak what we think or feel; when we try to tell our best thought to others in the hope that they may be benefitted thereby; when we oftimes wonder, since no response comes and no result is seen, whether the utterance was of service after all, we are helped and encouraged to recall that our own thought was once a writing on the clouds by others, who also wondered if they had accomplished aught, who never knew that it was received; that very message really which now we in turn are flashing on.

Recently the story was told of a naval officer on a warship who saw electric light signals on the clouds, and became curious to know what it meant. He found, to his astonishment, that a sailor on another ship was thus sending skyward

a prayer for divine help in a dreaded ordeal, which was to come the next day. In the simplicity of his faith the seaman thought thus to attract the notice of God, and insure attention to his earnest desire. All unconsciously he was, in this way, reminding others how genuine and how deep is the instinct of prayer, and by the unique method he adopted, in the utterance of his request to the Lord, he has brought forcibly into view the fact that prayer seems usually a writing upon clouds.

For it is a word spoken into the great silence. No one seems to hear or care; no result as we usually feel appears to follow. If God ever hears or heeds that message we do not know it. We may think he does, we may hope he does, we may believe he does, but we do not know. If prayer were only like telephoning when we know the person we speak to is surely listening, even though unseen. Thus we all feel, and we can only fall back upon the great instinct of our souls. As we cannot but speak what is the great truth to us, whether others appear to heed or not, feeling sure that faithful witness is not in vain, so we utter our praises and our petitions to the Most High assured that the Lord must know and act. That mighty instinct has been implanted in the soul of man by his Maker, and he who is thus the Inspirer must be the Hearer of prayer.

We are all wondering at times what we shall do in heaven. Very little has been revealed, but

we may be sure that when our powers are then perfected, and when all things are open to our view, we shall then have slowly unfolded to us all that entered into the formation of that marvellous composition which we call our character; and we shall learn whence and how our opinions and beliefs and knowledge came. The tracing out of all this in its intricacies and shadings will be an endless occupation of continual interest and surprise. We have a foreshadowing of it in the reminiscences of venerable people respecting the influences that shaped their youth, whether these recollections are in the form of disconnected conversation, or the carefully written-out story of one's life. On the verge of eternity they do this instinctively and we expect it from them.

Then too we shall not only fully know how we came to be what we are, but we shall be permitted to see clearly and in detail what we have done for others, not only precisely how we have influenced those with whom we come into personal contact, but how through them our influence has widened out and gone on through generations that followed. We feel down in our hearts that all this ought to be made known to us sometime and somewhere and it will be heaven to see it at last in its fulness and detail.

Moreover we feel that then and there we shall know how prayers have been answered. There must be a record of each of these and also the result of each. What will it be to have access to

such a record and to study out this in uttermost detail, finding new marvels continually of the glory and wisdom and power and grace of God in these complete and authentic disclosures of the secret things of Government. The saints of God shall shine like the stars in their glory, and as eternal years move on we shall come to know this host, which no man can number, as co-ordinated into a system where the relation of each to the other is clearly seen at last, and God shall be all in all.

II

LUKE'S FOREWORD

The preface of a book is commonly left unread, and we usually pass over the opening words of the Gospel written by Luke. Scholars may tell us that in writing it he uses classical Greek, and conforms to the method of Herodotus and Thucydides, and thus shows himself to have been an educated man. But we are too much interested in his account of Jesus to pay much heed to what he tells before it respecting the parentage of John the Baptist.

Yet we do well to read carefully his measured and weighty preliminary words:

> "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning these matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty of the things wherein thou was instructed."

We thus learn that even then many written accounts of the words and work of Jesus were current. These were not primarily to make him more widely known, doubtless, but it was felt that this

wonderful biography should not be stated in the unweighed words of ordinary utterance, nor confined to traditions likely to be distorted by the treachery of human memory. Both for the sake of those who had known Jesus personally, and for the sake of contemporaries who had never seen him, and much more for the sake of generations to come, such written records were instinctively deemed indispensable. From this preamble we infer that many of these accounts were disconnected and fragmentary, much like collections of anecdotes. Therefore Luke says he would write "in order," giving an account not only accurate but in due sequence.

But the great thoughts in this preface: the solemn and earnest purpose of the writer as he took pen in hand; the proof that he began, continued and ended his work in prayer for guidance; the evidence that he was expectant of and conscious of special assistance from on high which would give his work distinct and supreme value; this is expressed in the very last word in the Greek preface to which all leads up: "the certainty." "Accurately" he had traced all things; certainties he wrote down.

The Evangelist recognizes that the human mind craves certain knowledge. Peradventures, probablys, possiblys, we have a plenty. Opinions on all things in heaven and on earth abound, not only in conversation but in the schools and on the printed page. Human opinions are bewilder-

ing in their mass, their variety, their vagaries, their contradictions. From the reading of the history of philosophy a man is likely to rise with the cynical question of Pilate on his lips: "What is truth?"

Luke as an educated man knew this, and therefore he thus begins his book. The reader was not to question whether Luke was right. He was only to concern himself to understand what he wrote and to know the Christ whom he portrayed. It need not be said that this therefore is a unique preface. No ordinary man in his senses could write such words and make such amazing claims. The writer would not have said this as he began a treatise on medicine. Flesh and blood presented mysteries then as now to the ablest minds. But Luke does not hesitate to affirm that his following account of a far transcendent mystery, "the Word made flesh" was absolutely true.

This preface implies that Theophilus needed such a book and had a right to it as a seeker after truth. Will we allow that Theophilus was a privileged person; that he had claims on the All-wise and All-gracious Father more than we have; that he had needs really differing from ours? The very fact that this book has been saved out of the wreck of ages, and that it comes down to us practically unchallenged as the Gospel Luke wrote, is an answer. We need such a book as much as this man did. Traditions are as unreliable now as then. Opinions of men still are tinged with error.

If God inspired Luke to give this disciple a writing, in the reading of which he might attain unto the certainties of faith, surely that same book ought to be saved and secured to give certainties to our souls as well. Therefore the preface does not seem absurd in its claim, but rather promising what we feel we can rightfully expect.

Furthermore it brings out the great distinction between reason and revelation. It was not for Theophilus by long and patient reasoning to determine what God ought to say and do, and thus invent a Gospel. It was for him to hear God's Gospel; to be told certainly what God had said and done in the Person of his Son, Jesus Christ.

The earliest use of the reason of man in dealing with this large and decisive question we find in the account of the temptation in Eden. No matter what particular view we may take of the narrative it is thoroughly true to human experience. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" The true question was: "Did God say so?" That however was deftly put aside. The finite mind was invited and urged to consider and decide whether it was likely He said this. Then temptation came and error followed.

The case is typical. If it is our desire and purpose to determine for ourselves what God probably said and did we may expect Him to leave us to our own devices to find out if we can. That is rationalism. If it is our longing and hope to know what God wants us to believe and do; if we

use our reason humbly and sincerely to know this, our instinctive conception of the Heavenly Father makes us feel sure that He will find a way to lead us to the great certainties. The reason will not only be inspired to declare the truth to us, but our reason will also be inspired to discern it. The assurance of Jesus which Luke records must be true. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him?"

Beatitudes are based upon certitudes. The Sermon on the Mount opens with announcements of blessings and it ends with the reference to the house built upon a rock, against which swirling winds and waters beat in vain. That firm foundation on which happiness securely stands is theirs who hear and do my words, Jesus said. To make this foundation known to men Luke wrote this Gospel as he tells us at the outset of his work. How the purpose of that preface was fulfilled, as he looked back on the completed record appears in the opening words of the Book of Acts: "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up." Calm in the assurance that he could tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth concerning Christ, he knew with certainty when his testimony was finished that his testimony was true.

Referring to those other accounts of the life of

Jesus mentioned in this preamble, an old writer quaintly says: "Luke had no authority to suppress these other gospels; nor doth he reprehend, or calumniate them; but he writes the Truth simply, and leaves it to outwear falsehood; and so it hath." A striking illustration of this is given by Henry M. Stanley.

He tells of his visit to the court of Mtesa, King of Uganda, and of the interest shown by the African monarch in all that his white visitor had to tell him. Particularly was he interested in what Stanley had to state about the religion made known in the Scriptures. Their intercourse was interrupted for several months, and when resumed, Stanley took up the themes which he had endeavored to make clear. They felt that they needed a Bible, and so he set to work to translate the most important parts of the Scripture for them. But he says he gave them the Gospel of Luke entire. Thus this able and practical man selected this Book as the best possible account of our Lord for the instruction of an inquiring mind under such circumstances. And the marvelous triumph of Christianity in Uganda may in no small degree be attributed to this Gospel of the certainty concerning Christ.

III

V. D. M.

In a country cemetery there is a memorial stone on which the name is followed by the three letters, "V. D. M." Used as we are to honorary titles and their abbreviations, these letters are unique and in most minds probably awaken surprise. The questioner would learn that they stand for the Latin phrase meaning "Minister of the Word of God." This is obviously not a college degree, nor is it confirmed by church authority. It can only mean the designation of a character.

We feel sure that this man would have agreed with Professor Baldwin of Yale, who has been called a most successful teacher of the art of composition, when he declares that he who would learn to write English well must study the literary art in the English Bible. This minister of early days would be in full harmony also with Professor Phelps of Yale, who insists that "the English Bible combines the noblest prose and poetry with the utmost simplicity of diction." And he would have heartily subscribed to the declaration of Professor Gardiner of Harvard when he says: "Much reading of the Bible will soon bring one to an understanding of the mood in which all *art* seems a juggling with trifles, and an attempt to catch the unessential, when the everlasting verities are

slipping by. The silent, unhurrying rumination of the East makes our modern flood of literature seem garrulous and chattering; even the great literature of the Greeks loses beside the compression and massiveness of the Old Testament."

Deeper chords would have been struck in his heart by this careful and loving tribute to the Scriptures by Dr. Henry Van Dyke: "How wonderful, how supreme is the Bible as an utterance of life in literature! What range, what mastery of literary forms! The thoughts breathe with inspiration, the unconsumed words burn with the divine presence, the figures live and move." For this man found the life which is in God, and of God, regnant and radiant in the Book Divine.

Those three letters give us pause, while we consider, not only what they stand for, but what they mean in this time of Bibles by the million, and books about the Bible by the hundreds. Bible study is widespread and helps thereto abound. In the very multiplicity of these there lurks a peril which may not be overlooked.

A thoughtful and scholarly man remarked that the only way to appreciate, enjoy and be helped by a poem of value was to take time and pains to form a mental picture called forth by the incidents, descriptions and picturing words it contained. Those who have done this know what a mental delight and enrichment come thereby. This is the way to read the Bible. "Understandest thou what thou readest," said one to a person

busy with a sacred volume, as the Scriptures tell us. That had nothing to do with questions of criticism, high or low; nor with theological speculations, nor with bearings ecclesiastical. It had reference to the real value of Bible reading to a mind in humble and hearty contact with the Divine Mind as thus expressed, and flooded with light and filled with energy as a result.

Few things are more touching and instructive in this connection than the story of the man who came to the room where the famous picture of "Christ before Pilate" was on exhibition. Gruffly he asked of the person at the door where Christ was. When she grasped his meaning and directed him where to go, he turned to give a cursory glance at the painting. He paused before it astonished; fixed an earnest gaze on the canvas. Soon he took off his hat. Still he remained staring spellbound at the scene portrayed, and after a time he came slowly and reverently out, saying to the custodian as he passed, that he had come only because his mother asked him to. "Now," he fervently exclaimed, "God helping me, I'll be a better man." That is the way in which the Word of God was meant to minister to us in its reverent reading. We must not allow any one or any thing to come between us and that power, unwasting, unvarying, inspiring, which resides in the Bible.

Emerson said: "Discharge to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you shall be fol-

lowed with their love as by an angel." Thus we know this man felt whose memorial stone becomes so suggestive. The Word of God which had found entrance into his life must find utterance through his lips, and his conduct. What he had been taught he must transmit. He could not rest until other men looked up at his bidding to behold the vision glorious. If Moses and David and Isaiah and Paul and John had ministered to him, he must in turn minister to the men and women about him; a priest not by the laying on of human hands but by the anointing from on high.

This servant of the truth lived in the days of the old-fashioned pulpit, "the swallow's nest," as Mr. Beecher once humorously said; the narrow, box-like structure, reached by winding stairs and carefully closed with wooden doors. In sharp contrast to it is the pulpit of today, a simple desk standing on a platform as nearly as possible on a level with the pews. The preacher of today is a man among men; recognized as a factor in the life of his time as is indicated by the position which he occupies by their arrangement when he speaks to men. Because he has by nature unusual religious insight and wealth of religious ideas; because he has enjoyed special opportunities for the study of religious truths in their essential nature and true connection; because he is sufficiently detached from ordinary affairs clearly and broadly to understand men and the times; because he has the gift of effective utterance and well

marked leadership in all that broadens, deepens and enriches life, his fellows accept him as to them a minister of the Word of God.

This is a ministry not confined to any class set apart by human hands. The aged pilgrim Whittier describes was a minister of the Word of God, whether he had been ordained or not. And that ministry in its activity and efficiency is open to any who feels its privilege and power as the poet pictures it:

"O, lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer luster flings,
Than the diamond flash of the jeweled crown on the lofty brow of Kings,—
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee, and a blessing on the way.

. . . . . .

A small and meagre book from his folding robe he took,
Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price; may it prove as such to thee;
Nay—keep thy gold—I ask it not, for the Word of God is free.

The hoary traveler went his way, but the gift he left behind
Hath had its perfect work on that high-born maiden's mind,
And she hath turned from the pride of sin to the lowliness of truth,
And given her human heart to God in its beautiful hour of youth."

Dr. John Hall of New York was called the Apostle of Common Sense. Why this designation was given him is well illustrated by the remark of a man of the world, who said he always made it a point to hear Dr. Hall preach, when he happened to be in the city. And when asked the reason, he replied: "He always makes me feel like a fool if I do not agree with him." We remember that when this widely honored and useful minister delivered the late Lectures on Preaching, he entitled them: "The ministry of the Word." The title summed up his idea of the preacher's work: to get at and give out the true meaning of the Bible, in plain, practical, common-sense speech.

To do this is to be in the true Apostolic Succession. First among the writers of the New Testament Luke uses the phrase, when in the preface to the Gospel written by him, he speaks of those "who were eye witnesses, and ministers of the word." That the Apostles thus conceived of their work appears in their statement just before the choice and consecration of the deacons of the church: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word." That was service for the Princes of the church; demanding unremitting and strenuous activity of mind and soul from men inspired. The great sermon of Peter on the Day of Pentecost shows what this means, abounding as it does in quotations from the Holy Scripture; explanations and applications of these, and in allusions to facts about

Jesus, which Luke for instance, afterward wrote down that men of the day who never saw Peter, and men of all time might have a sure word of truth.

Such a ministry of the word is in one sense simple. In another it puts the heaviest possible demand upon every faculty of the most gifted intellect. As the small filament of metal glows when a powerful current of electricity is crowding the narrow channel in its swift passage so the brain of man is put to its greatest test when it receives and transmits the thoughts of the Infinite Mind. Dr. Jowett of Birmingham has given his personal testimony to this effect in a recent address before an English Church Council, when he said:

"When I turn to apostolic witness and preaching, I am growingly amazed at the fulness and glory of the messages. There is a range about it, and a vastness, and a radiance, and a colour which have been the growing astonishment of my latter years. When I turn to it, I feel as though I am in an Alpine country, majestic heights with tracts of virgin snow; suggestions of untraversed depths with most significant silence, mighty rivers full and brimming all the year round, fields of exquisite flowers nestling beneath the protecting care of precipitous grandeur, fruit trees on the lower slopes, each tree bearing its fruit in its season, songs of birds, moving air, awful tempest."

It is this "note of vastitude, this ever-present sense and suggestion of the infinite" which the speaker emphasized as characteristic of the true

preaching in every age, finding themes of endless variety, depth, energy, breadth, compassion and uplift in the Bible.

IV

THE SILENCES OF JESUS

What men say, and their voluntary silence as well, when they are entering the valley of the shadow of death have ever been noted with peculiar care and interest. This is specially true when we study not only what Jesus said and did, but what he refrained from saying and doing as he was under the shadow of the cross.

His significant silences on that last day of life, at critical moments, the Gospels faithfully note and thus duly emphasize.

Among the great experiences of life is a view from some lofty place of a broad and varied landscape spread before the eyes in all its charm of forest and field, hill and river, scattered homesteads and clustered houses, all brightly illumined by the sunlight. Sometimes the foot may dislodge a stone which, bounding to the edge of the cliff, disappears, and after an interval a dull crash is heard, telling of its final fall to the valley below, and with a thrill one realizes the depths close at our hand, into which a plunge would be so easy and so destructive.

We read that Jesus was crucified between two robbers, and the heart rejoices at the wondrous assurance he gave to one of them, writhing in the agonies of a cruel death, of Paradise close at

hand, unto which he should go with Jesus that very day. But what of that other wicked man? That omission is marked. To him Jesus never spoke a recorded word. We feel sure he never could have said a word to him, for the failure to record it if uttered would be inexplicable on any theory of inspiration. God would never have left men to anxious misgivings if there had been anything to tell them of assurance respecting this man. Our rejoicing over that penitent man, to whom came a great hope in his last hours is associated with a thrill of awe and fear, as we think of a wretched, impenitent soul, going into eternity, stained with crime, dying by the very side of the Savior of men, but to whom not one syllable was spoken by the Lord Jesus.

The perplexed and politic Roman governor, before whom Jesus was arraigned, seized the opportunity offered, when he heard that the prisoner was a Galilean, to send him for trial by Herod the Tetrarch, who was then in Jerusalem. Thus Pilate would get rid of a difficult case, and pay a compliment to the Jewish Prince with whom he had been at variance. Our interest is roused as we consider that meeting between Jesus and the man whose hands were stained with the blood of John the Baptist, and who had threatened to kill Jesus himself if he could get him in his power. As stern John Knox spoke out in faithful rebuke and upbraiding at the gay and worldly court of Queen Mary; as Paul "reasoned

of righteousness, and temperance and the judgment to come before profligate Felix; as Nathan the prophet denounced his sin to David the king; so should we expect Jesus to speak in burning words to this man and his courtiers on an occasion like this. But the Savior maintained absolute silence. Herod was in the presence of Christ but he never heard his voice.

Those awful silences of Jesus are to be sharply noted and taken account of when we make up our creed. For however men may criticize the creeds in Christendom, and the making of creeds at all, each person has some sort of a creed, even if it consist mainly in the denial of accepting any creed. Our eyes are fixed upon the penitent robber and the Paradise to which he was going. What of the other man? What of another atrocious sinner whom Christ met that very morning and to whom he would not speak? These are facts which we must face, and fit into our creed; with their appalling reminder of the depth of possible human depravity; what impenitence and hardness of heart may become; and with which there is not a faint suggestion that Jesus tried to deal.

"Remember Lot's wife" the Master once said, and He referred to the woman who turned away to destruction from the very side of rescuing angels of mercy. Jesus recalled that to remind men that others might do likewise, and harden themselves beyond the possibility of salvation. It means this or it means nothing. The Teacher

come from God surely was no rhetorical trifler or religious enthusiast whose words wandered from facts.

When Jesus was arraigned before the Jewish Supreme Court the forms of legal procedure were observed. A formal charge was made against the prisoner and corroborative evidence was sought. None was forthcoming that would stand the test. The judges were in a quandary. The condemnation of the accused man had been determined upon yet they would have the decision based on proper evidence. Finally they demanded of Jesus what he had to say in his own defence. The prisoner maintained silence. He knew as well as his judges that there was no case against him, and therefore no defence was necessary. We marvel at his perfect poise under such circumstances. Where any one would have spoken eagerly and riddled the charges with burning and scathing words Jesus said nothing. We remember, as they ought to have remembered, that mark of the Messiah as Isaiah says: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." His silence was a fulfillment of prophecy.

The Court was infuriated at his calm demeanor, and finally the High Priest put the prisoner on the witness stand. He administered the oath and put the question in the solemn words: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of the living God." Almost any man would have spoken when it was

plain that the case against him had broken down and demanded honorable and instant acquittal. Any man would have been paralyzed with horror and amazement when confronted with such a monstrous imputation on his sanity as the High Priest's word conveyed. But Jesus instantly broke silence with the calm words: "I am." Breathlessly the crowded court had watched him and awaited his answer, and for an instant the room was quiet as men heard that reply. They knew and Jesus knew exactly what the question meant and what the answer meant. They had charged him with making himself equal with God. Now in open court he was publicly asked if that charge were true and men heard him, in the most solemn, most explicit, and most emphatic way declare that he claimed that dignity and glory. And while the court room was still he went on to mention a prophecy of Daniel which they accepted as referring to the Messiah, and told them of the day at hand when they should see "the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." That prophecy he applied to himself.

Recovering themselves from the awe his words caused, the court unanimously condemned the audacious blasphemer, and hurried him to the Roman Governor for condemnation and punishment. Pilate at first proposed to leave the matter to the Jews, but when he learned that it was a case demanding capital punishment he took it up. His

first question of the prisoner was whether he was the King of the Jews, but the Roman judge was disconcerted when the prisoner proceeded to cross-examine him. Jesus demanded whether Pilate asked this from what he himself knew of him, or whether someone else had said so. At the very start Jesus was fixing Pilate's personal responsibility, and so when the Governor hastily disclaimed any personal knowledge in the matter, Jesus calmly went on to state wherein his avowed kingship consisted. But Pilate brusquely indicated that he knew and cared little about the truth Jesus referred to as the basis and bond of that kingdom.

Then he went out and told the Jews that he found no cause to punish the prisoner, but instantly they broke out in furious denunciations of Jesus, and when the storm had spent itself a little, to the astonishment of the experienced judge Jesus made no reply to it nor did he speak a word even when Pilate asked him to make what defence he pleased. The perplexed Governor now tried to shift the matter to Herod's decision, and when nothing came of that he proposed to scourge Jesus and let him go. The Jews protested at once and demanded that he be crucified. And when Pilate asked on what they based that demand, they answered: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Pilate, the hardened man of the world, cynical

and sceptical, was startled as he heard that. Re-entering the judgment hall, he gazed fixedly at the prisoner and exclaimed: "Whence art thou?" And Jesus answered not a word. Again we mark that significant silence. As he had refused to answer the priest's charges, he now refused to answer the Procurator's question. And Pilate roused by the refusal said: "Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?" All about them were the evidences indeed of Roman power; its symbols in the tribunal, its servants in the mail-clad soldiers who represented the legions that held the world in subjection. Power was the pride and the passion of that masterful race to which Pilate belonged.

Then Jesus spoke. He met that challenge of Imperial Rome, whose Emperor was as a god, with the words: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." This prisoner dared to say that Pilate was powerless in the presence of forces by which he himself was protected and which he controlled.

The silence of Jesus before the priests is the setting of his declaration that he is the Son of God, with that added reference to prophecy which came to them with peculiar force. They understood him to say that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and he meant them so to understand. The silence of Jesus before Pilate is the setting of the announcement of the dignity of the Son of

God, made with a reference to His power, which, on the other hand, was of peculiar meaning to his heathen judge. It is impossible for us to conceive how the Deity of Jesus Christ could have been more clearly and more conclusively stated by him, or under circumstances of more solemnity, and forms of more significance. There is but one fair interpretation, apparently, to put on his words. Men speak of the divinity of Jesus, but say that also with a certain plausibility and fitness of Plato, Socrates, Confucius, Buddha, Shakespeare. We mean thus to say that these eminent men for instance, have large wisdom, insight, force, elevation and breadth of character, in which there is, to some degree, a manifestation of divine excellence. Yet no one ever spoke intelligently of the deity of these persons, or of any man. But Deity Jesus Christ apparently referred to, and claimed for himself, under those circumstances mentioned; actual and absolute worship he accepted as his due; the throne of eternal dominion he was to accept and occupy, sovereign undisputed.

One of the memorable addresses at the meeting of the Church Federation in New York City several years ago was given by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall. At the outset in chosen words, slowly and carefully uttered, he explicitly stated his belief in Jesus as the Son of God, Very God of very God. Every one knew that he made Christ indeed equal with God. He went on to say that it might be permissible, however, to compare Jesus

with other moral and religious teachers among men, and as it were, allow him to be numbered with them as he himself had done in recently presenting Christianity to the Oriental mind. For it was his profound conviction that all thoughtful and sincere seekers after the truth would in due time see qualities in this Jesus that made him supreme, unapproachable, that there was logically and spiritually no final pause for one who fairly weighed the words and deeds of Jesus Christ until he was found prostrate at the feet of the Savior, reverently saying, "My Lord and My God."

V

THE HOT SPRINGS IN THE WILDERNESS

Perhaps the most ancient folk song of literature is found in the Bible. It was doubtless sung by the Hebrews at the well that gushed forth in the wilderness of their pilgrimage, and in all likelihood was chanted for centuries afterwards by their maidens as they gathered by their village wells with their water jars. Then sang Israel this song:

"Spring up, O well; sing, ye unto it;
The well which the princes digged,
Which the nobles of the people delved,
With the sceptre, and with their staves."

Samuel Longfellow has transformed this into the final words of the hymn he wrote to the praise of the Holy Spirit:

"Holy Spirit, Joy Divine,
Gladden thou this heart of mine;
In the desert ways I sing,
Spring, O Well, forever spring."

But long before the event commemorated by this historic song of Israel, we find the Bible telling the story of Anah, whose daughter Esau married. While he was in charge of the asses of Zibeon his father, he found in the wilderness hot

springs, of which the fame spread far and wide, ensuring to him enduring remembrance as their discoverer.

Lasha, a place mentioned in the Book of Genesis, and meaning "fissure" is perhaps a prose designation of this remarkable spot. In the Book of Joshua we find a town named Zareth-Shehar, meaning "splendor of the dawn," which probably is a poetic name for this locality. And it can be none other than the Callirhoe of which Josephus speaks, and which Pliny describes, famous as a resort for invalids, like similar hot springs elsewhere now whose curative power in certain diseases is recognized.

Goethe closes the story of Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, in which he traces with master hand the stages in culture and development of character through which the young man passed, with the significant words, "Thus Saul, the son of Kish, seeking his father's asses, found a kingdom."

The less familiar, but more ancient story of Anah yields the same lesson. The Canaanite youth, diligent in the doing of duty, faithful to the charge committed to him by his father, found the marvellous springs which gave him reputation, and a mention in the imperishable record of the Book of Books. It is as fresh and vivid illustration of the reward that comes to him who does his task, however humble, with fidelity and singleness of heart.

The account of that fountain about which Israel clustered and chanted the song quoted follows right after the record of the people's sin, and their deliverance by gazing in faith upon the brazen serpent uplifted by divine command among them. Jesus has forever made this memorable and instructive, as he applies it to illustrate his own work as Savior of men and which we too must receive and appropriate by faith alone. We are familiar with the Bible references to the water of life. Here it speaks of the waters of health. How the mention of the hot springs in the wilderness, found by Anah, would become luminous, were a Paul, with his marvellous insight into Scripture, to take it as an illustration of his words: "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of our God." What might this incident yield if a John, who saw so clearly the symbolisms of the Bible, used it, to make plain his meaning when he wrote: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." For as Jesus recalls that the serpent bitten were instantly cured after the look of faith in obedience to the Divine command, and bids us infer that by looking to Himself in simple faith, salvation comes to our sin-diseased nature; so Paul and John plainly teach the cleansing and curative power of the blood of the Atonement upon him who simply believes.

"How can these things be?" exclaimed that

astonished thinker, Nicodemus, when the Master spoke to him of that change in man which we call regeneration. The whole world echoes the question. But it was not answered then, and it has not been answered since. God has guarded well the secret of the birth of man, and the new birth of a human soul as well. For centuries keen and equipped minds have assailed the problem, but they can no more answer it fully and finally than the least inquiring of believers. The wise men of the world who study to know the beginnings of life are like the man, of whom Jesus speaks, who cast the seed into the ground. The seed sprung and grew up, "he knew not how."

Men take up this calm, clear, unhesitating, uncompromising statement of the disciple who was close to the Master at the cross: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Instantly the question arises, "How can this thing be?" Many answers to the question have been given, and this very fact serves to show that the Bible itself affords no clear answer. "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus all thoughtful men must ever have felt. But he at once goes on to say that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." This is incomprehensible likewise to the mind of man. The vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ seems to be a plain Scripture doctrine, but no one understands it.

The most elaborate explanations leave a mystery unsolved. We must fall back on the belief that it is God's method of full and final atonement, just as Abraham and David did when they offered sacrifice as they were commanded. How it availed they did not know. They simply did as they were told and left the rest to God.

In the life of Mrs. Palmer there is mention made of a remarkable address delivered by Mr. Durant before the students and faculty of Wellesley College, of which she was at the time one of the professors. The old lawyer was an earnest Christian, and he was devoted to the interests of the young women, who came for an education to the college he had founded, and Mrs. Palmer has recorded the overpowering and thrilling effect of his argument and appeal. His text was: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." That was central in the Gospel to this man of acute and trained legal mind.

The personal testimony of a famous lawyer, one of the master minds of America, may be recalled, and in view of certain current speculations respecting miracles as attesting the Messiahship, his words have special significance. Daniel Webster said: "I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. The miracles which he wrought establish, in my mind, his personal authority, and render it proper for me to believe whatever he asserts; I believe, therefore, all his declarations, as well when he declares himself to be the Son of God, as

when he declares any other proposition. And I believe there is no other way of salvation than through the merits of his atonement."

And precisely on what that atonement was based and what it was, is plain in his repeated and emphatic quotation, in his last hours, of Dr. Watts' familiar words:

"No blood of beasts, nor heifers slain,
For sin could e'er atone;
The blood of Christ must still remain,
Sufficient and alone."

Josephus tells us that Herod, the aged and blood-stained king, suffering from many and agonizing ailments, came in his last days to Callirhoe, hoping that the baths in the hot springs would give him relief. The remedial value of these was recognized in that time, as the people of today resort to the famous hot springs near Tiberias by the Lake of Galilee to avail themselves of their attested curative powers. Long before that Herod had marked also the beauty and military strength of the place, and on a lofty rock he had built a citadel of great strength and a palace of much magnificence, while around it had grown a city of considerable size and many attractions.

Herod the Tetrarch afterward ruled this region, and while in residence at the Palace, as Josephus records, he came into contact with his prisoner John the Baptist. Into the dungeon of the citadel the faithful witness bearer was thrust

to gratify the hatred of a wicked woman; and while the neighboring palace was the scene of royal feasting and revelry at the celebration by the Court of Herod's birthday, in that darksome cell this brave man died by the executioner's sword.

John had come preaching in the wilderness the remission of sins through the baptism of repentance, and the consequent cleansing and renewal of the life. Close by the hot springs in the wilderness, to which men were wont to come for cure of their bodily ills; which had been pouring forth their healing waters for centuries; and which today continue in unchanged and undiminished flow, rest and reward fittingly came to that great servant of the Lord, whose ministry found its true close when he had pointed men to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

VI

INDIVIDUALITY AND INSPIRATION

Church Councils of our own time are not of much interest unless matters of broad and general concern come up for discussion and decision, and such assemblies of an earlier day are important commonly to historians only. Yet the first Christian Council becomes of instant interest when the attention is directed to the remarkable way in which its decision of the question in hand is worded. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us" the record reads.

Unmistakably then, the Holy Spirit is a Person according to the view of those early Christians. They had been with Jesus, heard his references to the coming of the Holy Spirit, and knew fully about the event that makes Pentecost forever memorable. This is their way of referring to Him as really present at that council as much as Peter or any one recorded on the list of members. A course of action may seem good to a person, but not to an influence. That mode of expression would be as absurd as to say that the fall of a stone seems good to gravitation, or the turning of a windmill seems good to the air.

They say at the outset of this decree that it seemed good to the members of the council to send certain persons to the Church at Antioch. That

of course we understand. Then they go on to say that the doctrinal decision they made seems good to the Holy Spirit and to the persons present at that time. However we may find a difficulty in understanding the subject, this seems unquestionable that the Holy Spirit was considered as an intelligent, individual personality.

Moreover, they meant to recognize the Deity of the Holy Spirit. To them He was the Head of the Church. They do not say this decree was approved by the Father, nor do they affirm that it was approved by the Lord Jesus. The Person whose approval or disapproval was matter of supreme concern was the Holy Spirit, because the Master had distinctly announced his coming into the world, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the authoritative teacher and guide of men. There might be a blasphemy against the Spirit of God, Christ said, and it was a sin beyond pardon. This Person then was to be regarded with reverence; his office was to be honored, and unto Him they were to pay the worship and devotion which God alone could claim.

That seems to be a statement of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit which this decree involves.

Jesus had said: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The men that heard that, as well

as we who read it, understood the Master to say that the Holy Spirit would bear witness, and they also should bear witness. Now this decree in harmony with that declaration meant that what the Holy Spirit might think and determine was one thing, and what they might think and determine was another. The Spirit and the Council might not agree. The point is that they did agree. They were not only in accord with one another, but they were in accord with Him. This and this alone gave authority to their decree.

Instantly then this whole subject becomes of pressing importance to all of us. For obviously the matter of prime importance is for a man to be able to say: "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and me." That is not blasphemy. It is not fanaticism nor pretence. It is the privilege of God's child and servant, and it really is all that gives authority of utterance. Of course this may be abused, and it has been grossly. That, however, is no reason why we should question or deny a privilege so glorious. We may turn impatiently from the doctrine of a Pope who speaking in the seat of authority surrounded by prelates is deemed infallible. We may regard with scorn the devotees of a Dowie or Mother Eddy. But the great truth which stands out here in its sublime import we may not turn from. The possibility of realizing it ourselves we ought reverently to contemplate and covet.

There is more involved. The neglect of this

is disbelief in its highest form, and disability in its most disastrous manifestation. Jesus points this out clearly in his references to the ministry of the Spirit of Truth. If dishonor is done to the Father when we do not receive and obey his Son, equal dishonor is done not only to the Father but to the Son if we fail to receive and obey the Spirit who has come in the stead of Jesus. Therefore we must earnestly and painstakingly inquire what this means, and how in the council chamber of our own mind we may take action under such auspices as these early Christians.

In the first place it was all so natural. After considerable discussion of the subject, James, who apparently was president, rose and quietly stated the opinion he had reached. He had done this after calm and careful consideration of all the facts in the case, and he summed the matter up as a judge might do. He did this without any special manifestation of the import of it all, and yet that opinion was afterward stated in the formal decree as in accord with the mind of the Spirit. He went into no trance; he attracted no attention in any way; he was apparently utterly unconscious of superintendence and guidance by a Higher Power, yet that guidance he and all the rest present afterward explicitly avowed. So far as any one can see it was all as simple as our act at any time, when we make up our mind and state our conclusion.

It means then that in the ordinary operation of

our minds, our finite and fallible intelligence may be in perfect accord with the infinite and infallible Spirit of God. That is unmistakable if this record means anything at all. The age of miracles is past, we are told. But this is not a miracle. It is only a fulfilling of the distinct promise of Christ that "the Spirit shall lead you into all truth." How the Spirit does this he did not tell us. But since we know hardly anything as to the way in which the mind acts, and cannot conceive what the mind is anyhow, we need not delay with that question. The important matter is, if this great guidance is possible how is it to be enjoyed.

We notice that this particular council was not opened with prayer, as among us is the rule with conferences, assemblies, convocations of a religious character. Those men would have deemed an opening prayer to be as unnecessary as to unitedly stand up and breathe. They habitually lived in an atmosphere of prayer. This was not an unusual, occasional, or strenuous exercise with them. It was as natural as to breathe. The indwelling of the Spirit was then nothing strange to men of that type. They lived continually in the sense of the divine presence. Prayer was as natural as conversation with each other, and at the family hearthside. If the Spirit with difficulty guides us it is because we make uncommon work of prayer.

Then this council had no docket; no need of a

call to order by a presiding officer. Each man knew the business in hand, and upon it he fixed his undivided attention. There was no personality in debate; no pride of opinion; no personal prejudice and rivalry; no ambition for leadership. Each man was sincerely and humbly anxious to know the truth about the subject in hand, and to decide it aright. No wonder then that at the end they could say: "this seems good to the Holy Spirit and us." They fully retained their own individuality, and personality in their accord with one another and with Him.

We live in a day when the individual demands the right to entertain, and to express his personal opinion; to say emphatically: "this seems good to me." The modern world is, obviously intolerant of the divine right of kings or priests authoritatively to declare. That lion statue in front of the Parliament House in London means much in these days, when the people of England demand government by those alone whom they choose to represent them. The German nation is beginning to make the same demand, and even Russia is following in the same pathway. The right and duty of individual judgment is the very corner stone of most advanced modern civilization, and this is all that concerns the man himself. At the vagaries, the rashness, the unsteadiness, the passions of popular sovereignty we are oftimes aghast. We do not wonder that those are found who deny that government can safely be entrusted to such

immature and unsteady hands. The condition has come to stay, however, and the great leaders of the world are those who recognize and strive to guide this mighty movement.

That statue in the city of Paris representing a lion guarding the urn, in which ballots are cast, has a definite meaning as to the need of accurate registry of the people's will thus expressed. But not only must the ballot box be guarded. Those who come to it must be guided. In its ultimate analysis the voice of the people must be the voice of God, if the voice of the people is to speak wisdom and truth. In that view of the matter this language of those ancient Christians has its profound meaning for all time. The authority of the Holy Spirit must be recognized and obeyed; His guidance must be asked; reverent dependence on Him must be manifested if popular government is to be a success.

At a great popular meeting in New York City, held in Cooper Institute, the need of Sabbath observance was presented. One of the speakers alluded to Sabbath sanctity as due to the will of God, whereupon scores of Anarchists and Socialists rose, and shouted disapproval. They would tolerate no mention of God whatever, denying Him and His rule. It was blood curdling to hear those hoarse shouts from human lips. Practically however, multitudes who would not join these persons, repudiate His authority and guidance; deem it entirely unnecessary to seek His guidance in

their affairs; see no connection between a Bible and a ballot; feel not the priceless privilege of prayer; and stare in amazement at any who quote the words of these early Christians uttered in this instance as having any earthly significance now.

There is pressing need then for us to consider precisely what this means; exactly what it implies; seek to realize the same coincidence in our own judgments with His, humbly co-operating with the Holy Spirit in His broad work of teaching, transforming, ennobling men that the mind of the Spirit may be the mind of us all. For as the compass needle oscillates till it finally yields to the mighty and unseen magnetic current which girdles the globe, so the mind of man swings to and fro uncertainly in its opinions, till it yields to the control of the invisible spirit of truth, and comes to rest in a final rectitude of judgment, which finds a sublime and simple statement in the words, "it seemeth good to the Holy Spirit and me."

VII

THE STUDIO OF THE SOUL

A psychologist must have somewhat of a poet's gift, if his mental philosophy is not to be microscopic and mechanical, and his enumeration and co-ordinating of the intellectual faculties is to be more than a mere cataloguing. David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, was a poet whose reputation is established, and his knowledge of the heart and mind, though perhaps not scientific in our view, was both deep and real. An illustration of this occurs in the remarkable language he used at the end of life, when on the presence of a great assemblage, he offered a prayer in which the deepest desires of his soul found expression. "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people, and establish their hearts unto thee." By the heart he meant the mind; by the thoughts he meant the ideas in the mind, and by the imagination he understood the form or shape assumed by these vague and undefined thoughts, when combined into definite opinions. For the word he used means the fashioning, shaping of substance, such as may be done by the sculptor in his studio, when the finished statue appears bodying forth his thought.

David understood well that thoughts are of very little value or significance until these have taken shape and form. What vaguely flits or floats through the mind is of little import to us or to others. Therefore what is done in the studio of the soul becomes the matter of real importance.

This appeared in the personal counsel the King had given to Solomon, his son and successor, whose brilliant and powerful intellect the aged King had delighted to observe in its wide activities and development. The marvellous mental powers of the father his son had inherited, with additional gifts of distinction. The parallel to the two, perhaps, may be sought in vain in family history. Solemnly David turned toward the Prince in the presence of all the nobles and great men of the realm and said: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts."

David's hopes were bound up in the success of Solomon's reign. To his hands a mighty sceptre came; and the glory of the royal house was entrusted to him. All David's experience and learning; all his great personal powers to inspire and broaden the mind; all the educative influences at the command of a mighty monarch were utilized to train and equip this splendid intellect, whose depth and range and accuracy observant ones

noted even then with astonishment. All depended, as the King knew and averred, upon the shape Solomon's thoughts took.

This shaping was not like the making of a molten image when the fluid mass of metal was run into a mold. Neither was this to be a chiselling into shape as the skilful sculptor deals with wood and stone which comes under his hand. But rather as the human body assumes its normal form; each part taking its due place freely and naturally in the developed organism so the thoughts were to take their due form. That each faculty of the young Prince might be thus developed and co-ordinated was the father's aim and study.

This could not come through any outward constraint. It must be an inward growth. That was the real problem of education as David's language shows; then as now to every parent and teacher. It involved a certain indifference to those varying moods and ideas of a young mind, with a supreme concern only about the way in which these become fixed. Emphasis upon the unessential frets, even infuriates a youth subjected to it, while he may insensibly yield to the wise teacher who quietly keeps what is all important in view. The check rein frets, while the guiding rein gently used is not resented.

God's relation to this mental development David emphasizes. The King would not live to see the final form in which Solomon's thoughts

would be fixed, but the Lord would surely know. Through the mind of this man the Spirit of the Lord would freely go, observant of all its workings, and beholding its final conclusions. What others might guess at; what Solomon himself might hardly be aware of, the Lord would fully and accurately know. That the wise father impressed on his son; and that absolute and unerring Divine judgment he bids him anticipate without fear, because his thoughts had been ordered aright.

The possibility of aberrations in such a wide intelligence as Solomon's David must have foreseen, and against it his warning was given with utmost impressiveness. The after events show how that caution was needed. Brought up with clear and decided views of religious truth, that eager and eclectic intellect coming into contact with the thoughts and theories of men, other philosophies, other forms of worship insensibly broadened to include things incongruous, and become even sympathetic with what he once would have abhorred. He became tolerant toward features and forms of idolatry which his father had abominated with all his soul, and against which he earnestly sought to fortify his son. Liberal culture led Solomon to a liberal theology. He became in a sense a man of the world; a mighty prince and a broad-minded thinker at whose splendid and intellectual court philosophers of all schools found welcome. His mind became a Pan-

theon: a very Parliament of religions. And Jehovah found false images in Solomon's mind on pedestals alongside of that simple monument of devotion, in which the glory of Israel's God had once found representation peerless and alone, as it ever did in the heart of David the King. That splendid intellect had been allowed not only to perceive, but to receive, harbor, and fashion thoughts, erring and false, into forms that were allowed to abide, and fatally pervert, divide and degrade Solomon's soul.

This great king took all culture as his province and his realm. The Bible lays stress on the breadth of his intellectual sympathies and activities. The perils of free and wide ranging thought could not possibly be more emphasized than in the story of his errors. Liberalism led him astray and left him with many false gods enthroned in his soul. His father's words must have come home to him often: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." That divine inspection we must welcome and be ready for, and the divine judgment of the work of our minds must ever be awaited and accepted as final. The imaginations of our thoughts we must fling aside as faulty and vain, however perfect these may seem to us or our associates; if not in accordance with the infallible standards of truth by which God judges.

What the father said to his son, the King said afterwards in a great assembly of his people in that prayer which has been quoted. David as a monarch could think of men in the mass, as well as of individuals. He well knew that national well-being depended on the forms which the popular thought assumed. This absolute king was aware that public opinion was in the end supreme and determinative. At the outset of his public life it had been his aim to inspire his defeated, divided, demoralized fellow countrymen with great national ideals and purposes; to unite them not only under his sceptre but under the sway of grand and fine ideas, and Israel had then become a great kingdom. What he had done for his own generation he sought to do also now for the generation to come; for he knew well that the glory of the nation would depend, not on broad fields and full granaries; not on populous towns and cities; not on the opulence of nobles or the comfort of the people; not on largely attended schools of learning; not on a veteran army whose banners had ever led to victory. On the imagination of the thoughts of Israel's heart all depended. This alone gave the nation distinction. This alone would insure success and stability.

The formation of public opinion awes us as we behold it. When we see a great idea beginning to take possession of the minds of men; the idea of emancipation in the hearts of the oppressed; the idea of order and union to the disunited; the idea

of justice and righteousness, where greed and fraud have ruled; the idea of reform where evils are recognized; the idea of devoting a nation's power to the deliverance and development of those downtrodden and dwarfed; the mind is thrilled at the forces which are slowly taking shape to such tremendous effect. Before our eyes public opinion is forming irresistible in its movement, massiveness and endurance. To trace and point out such facts is the province of the historian as distinguished from the mere retailer of anecdotes, or the chronicler of current events. To throw our energies into the creation and development of such a sentiment is the supreme service of every good citizen whose work is well directed and assured of permanent value.

Therefore David uttered this wonderful prayer. For he well knew that this stupendous and indispensable achievement was beyond the power of man; though an absolute monarch like himself; though a king with all the gifts with which Solomon himself might possibly be endowed. No power but that of Almighty God could keep these great ideas in the hearts of the people; in forms fixed and abiding and dominant. David at this culmination of a career so distinguished and so successful gathers up all the lessons of experience in that prayer; the prayer of a father; the prayer of a patriot; the prayer of the founder of a great kingdom which now was to pass out of his masterful hands. To the Almighty he turned; in Him alone he put his trust and hope.

The language he used was a quotation from the most ancient records of man; and it showed the anxieties and fears of his soul. Of those lived before the flood, he read as do we: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." That recurred to the king's mind. And he prayed to God that after him might not come the deluge; the judgment of the Lord on his son, on his people because they did not like to retain the Lord in their thoughts. He was fearing in them the state of mind which Paul with horror afterward saw in the nations of his time: "Becoming vain in their reasonings, their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things." Such conditions David saw all around him. That his family and his people might be exempt was his supreme hope, which found its only real utterance, not in an appeal to them, but in an appeal for them and before them unto Jehovah by whom the heart is searched and by whom alone the heart is established.

VIII

THREE EPOCHS IN THE LIFE OF A YOUNG MAN

Julius Cæsar was found in tears after he had been reading the life of Alexander of Macedon, lamenting that though an older man he had yet done nothing to compare with the dazzling triumphs of that celebrated king. That career was indeed amazing in its rapid and early successes, and yet its stages of development were normal. At the age of fifteen, the prince was put in the care of Aristotle, the famous philosopher, and the mind is stirred at the thought of a pupil so gifted coming under the guidance of a teacher so great. At twenty Alexander became king on the death of his father, and at the age of twenty-six he conquered Persia and was the Master of Asia.

At the age of fifteen or sixteen we enter upon the period of life called adolescence. The youth is an object then of anxiety, and even of despair sometimes, to parents and teachers. The mind is astir with new interests, ambitions and desires; one is at once wilful and weak; rapid and incongruous changes and choices exhibit themselves; authority is flouted and experience challenged; definite principles are not established, and the outcome of all is anxiously awaited by those who have the welfare of a youth most at heart. Pa-

rents and teachers often feel then that they need all the authority and influence of an Aristotle, the patience of Job, and the love that hopeth all things to deal with a young person under their charge. Through this mysterious and critical period each one has to go as best he may.

At twenty-one we determine that a person comes of age, as we say. We are agreed that he is then old enough to inherit property, make contracts and exercise the right of a voter. Character has taken a certain fixedness by that time, after the tumultuousness and uncertainty of adolescence. The young king comes to the throne of responsibility, and he begins to show what is in him, as did Luther when he put aside the allurements of ambition to become a monk, and began to form convictions which his after career exemplified. Lincoln at the age of twenty-one was in New Orleans, and witnessed there some of the iniquities and cruelties of slavery. We are told that he then and there registered a vow to smite slavery hard if the opportunity were ever his, and though the story may not be true, it well enough illustrates how some of our distinctive and lasting traits begin to manifest themselves at this age.

At about twenty-six we usually reach another marked epoch. Then the physical frame attains maturity; then the previous generation affords opportunity for us to assert ourselves, and take up the work of the world in a more personal and responsible way. New home ties are commonly

formed by this time, or arranged. The professional man at this age has as a rule completed his education and is ready for his special work. How often makers of wills delay the distribution of their property till their heirs reach their twenty-fifth year. The United States Constitution prescribes that one may be elected to membership in the House of Representatives when he reaches the age of twenty-five, and Russia makes this to be the period when one comes of age.

Cicero was twenty-six when he began his career as a lawyer and a public man, and the same was true of Lincoln and Gladstone. At this age Napoleon commanded the troops which crushed revolution in Paris, and thus came prominently into notice, while Wellington was twenty-six when he first held independent military command. At this age William the Silent formed his resolve at Vincennes to save his imperilled people, and Washington had reached this time of life when elected to the Virginia Legislature and so entered upon public life. Milton was twenty-six when he wrote "Comus" and became noted as an author, and at this age Calvin wrote the Institutes which have given him fame, while Mendelssohn, Handel, Hayden, and Beethoven were about twenty-six when they came into prominence as musicians.

Practically it is found that in each person's experience these three epochs at about this period are marked, and when we read biographies the same fact challenges our attention almost unvary-

ingly. In our own development we are to watch ourselves at these critical epochs with keenness that we make the most of new aptitudes and opportunities which then are manifested, while in our attempts to help others we are to be watchful of the right use of influence at these critical points in their career.

The Bible has one biography which brings out the self-same fact, showing how religion makes its appeal to the human heart at these epochs in life. Josiah, the King of Judah, is the only person named in Scripture, where the critical moments in his career are thus chronologically marked, and the record is worthy of our close attention.

He was sixteen, "while he was yet young, when he began to seek the Lord." In this period of adolescence the mind and heart are susceptible peculiarly to religious impressions, as to others. Then the appeal of religion may be made with most confidence and most success. The soul is awaking with the other powers of the nature, and it is wonderfully receptive. The vast majority of persons date their serious interest in religion to this period in their lives, and with all prayers for wisdom and grace parents and teachers are to endeavor to lead youth at this time "to seek the Lord." All that has been said and done before this is preparatory. Then may we hope to see religion assert and enthrone itself in the heart.

Josiah was twenty-one when a new stage in his

career was marked, and is noted in this remarkable biography. Then "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim and the graven images, and the molten images." The result of his seeking the Lord is now shown in the resolute, and courageous work of a reformer. Errors and evils were clearly seen and kingliness of spirit was shown in the determination to do away with them. This is the age when the new generation begins to show its impatience with evils which the preceding generation had become tolerant of, or felt unable to grapple with and do away. To young people at this time reform in all its aspects appeals with great power, and they are ready to unite and undertake crusades. The rubbish of the ages they would clear away. What ought not to be, they are prepared to say shall not be. How much the world owes to this splendid enthusiasm and purpose of the king, when he comes of age.

At twenty-six, when Josiah "had purged the land, and the house," he sent the great officials of the city and realm "to repair the house of the Lord his God." Now he enters upon the constructive period of his life. The rubbish of idolatry he had, during those years, resolutely removed. Now he devoted his royal energies to the repair and renovation of the Temple, and to building up the true religion among his people. The royal reformer now becomes a royal builder and this is the normal development of the religious life.

Young men and young women at this period ought to be found actively engaged in building up the cause and kingdom of the Lord; throwing into this work all the enthusiasm and energies of their nature, eagerly utilizing opportunities open to them, and guided by a wisdom which is the fruit of experience and meditation in their maturing years.

The historians of the world dwell upon the story of Alexander of Macedon, and they pay little heed to the short record of this Jewish King. But judged aright Josiah is a more human reality to us; nearer to each one of us in the deep experiences of life. Alexander we may admire, but this man, monarch though he was, is as one of us in the privileges of a common career. His search for truth; his abhorrence of error; his devotion to the right, these are within the reach of all of us, the best characteristics of each of us, and these alone give meaning, dignity and coherence to any life. The Bible makes no mention of the Macedonian conqueror, but the story of this King of Judah it preserves, and his name and fame shall be known among men wherever the Scriptures go. "The Word of the Lord endureth forever," and those who seek and serve the Lord shall be held in lasting remembrance.

IX

THE TOWN CLERK'S TRIBUTE.

In the ancient city of Ephesus there was an official who may perhaps be well enough designated by the title of town clerk. He seems to have been a personage of much influence and dignity whose functions would often bring him into public notice. Certain Jews on one occasion had come to the city and after a time a maddened mob gathered, and finally rushed to the great amphitheatre as the only place where a public assemblage of such size could be held, and there passionately demanded the severe punishment of these men who were charged with acts and words derogatory to the honor of Diana, the city's patron goddess.

After the clamor ceased this Ephesian official appeared before the people, and when silence ensued he made a remarkable speech which had noteworthy effect. In the first place he pointed out that the accused men were not robbers of temples. Now the Temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the most splendid buildings in the world. It was not only enriched by magnificent and costly appointments and decorations, but by reason of its peculiar sanctity it was made a place of safe deposit for money and valuables. Great temptations to robbery, therefore, were presented, and an

inscribed marble found among the ruins of Ephesus shows the peculiar detestation of such a crime in the view of the people. Paul and his associates could not be charged with such sacrilege.

Furthermore he declared that no one could charge them with blasphemy of their goddess. They had never said or done anything to cast ridicule or bring contempt upon the great Diana of the Ephesians. And not a man in that excited throng could utter one word in challenge of the assertions thus publicly made by this calm, judicious and authoritative official.

From such a man and under such circumstances that opinion respecting those Christians is most illuminating. He respected them for zeal without fanaticism; for earnestness and enthusiasm united to saving common sense. And that fact is somewhat remarkable.

For Paul was an intelligent man and an earnest Jew, and we know full well how he felt about Diana and her sanctuary; that splendid structure enshrining a rude, misshapen wooden image. All that the prophets had said ridiculing and denouncing such idolatry he well knew and heartily sympathized with. The folly and debasement of it all he deeply felt. Yet no one had ever known him to show this by any word or act. He was guiltless of sacrilege all must allow.

Moreover, Paul was not an ordinary traveller, who had come to Ephesus to see the people and edifices of that famous city. He came there with

a great and consuming purpose: of which he never lost sight, and which he had prosecuted night and day for months. But his zeal had never outrun discretion; he had never awakened prejudices nor aroused the passions of men.

So it was in Athens. When he visited it he found a city wholly given over to idolatry, and as the narrative says his spirit was provoked within him. But the stirring of his soul was never shown by unwise and unmeasured words or acts. We are told that he reasoned daily with any one and every one he met in places of public resort, but it was done with courtesy, dignity and self-restraint. Attention was excited but antagonism was not aroused. And finally with great courtesy he was invited publicly to address the Athenians whose respect he had won by his cultivated, courteous bearing, and though that address was delivered close to the great Temple and statue of Minerva he said not a word assailing the beliefs of those whom he addressed.

Paul was a radical, in thorough sympathy with the procedure announced by John the Baptist, "the axe is laid at the root of the trees." But how wise he was. He saw that the worship of Diana at Ephesus was a religion of a kind; not the true religion at all, but it really witnessed to the religious instincts and nature of men. So far it was his standing ground. If there were no religion of any kind at Ephesus Paul might despair of finding anything in the heart of the people to

which he could appeal. He took them as he found them and then patiently, wisely, lovingly sought to lead them to see the truth in its fulness and beauty. He did not abuse Diana worship; he used it. He appealed to the deep instincts and needs of the soul, and when these were roused he knew that men would turn to the broad, deep, real truth of the Gospel.

The words then of this Ephesian official are the world's stamp of approval on a sane religion which is all aglow with quenchless zeal, but which observes the proprieties of time and place; raises no barriers by the very fierceness of its energy; exhibits ever the love that endureth all things, hopeth all things, and never faileth; and which wins the favor not only of kindred minds "but of these that are without," as Paul once said. Thus he becomes the pattern for every religious teacher, whatever his sphere and station. He is the pattern, as well, of every really effective and useful reformer, whether moral, social or political. Paul stood like a rock when forced openly to take a stand. If there had to be a fight he was in the forefront and he never left the field. But he never forced a fight. He was a man of peace who never knew fear. He was a man of flaming zeal, but not a fire-brand.

In the Life of Henry M. Stanley, we are told of his hope and indeed expectation that his body should be laid in Westminster Abbey beside that of David Livingstone whom he had sought and

found in Africa. The funeral was held in that historic building, but interment there was denied. Men instinctively feel that the restless, energetic, fiery Stanley was of distinctly lower grade of spirit, than Livingstone, of whom he reverently and lovingly wrote:

"He preached no sermon, by word of mouth while I was in company with him; but each day of my companionship with him witnessed a sermon acted. The Divine instructions, given of old on the Sacred Mount, were closely followed, day by day, whether we rested in the jungle-camp, or bided in the trader's town, or savage hamlet. Lowly of spirit, meek in speech, merciful of heart, pure in mind, and peaceful in act, suspected by the Arabs to be an informer, and therefore calumniated, often offended at evils committed by his own servants, but ever forgiving, often robbed and thwarted, yet bearing no ill-will, cursed by the marauders, yet physicking their infirmities, most despitefully used, yet praying daily for all manner and condition of men! Narrow, indeed, was the way of eternal life that he elected to follow, and few are those who choose it."

Livingstone, as Stanley knew him and portrayed him, was an embodiment and illustration of the spirit Paul showed in Athens and Ephesus, and which won the respect and esteem of the heathen themselves, whom he sought to convert and Christianize. That is the spirit and the method of all who would transform and uplift men, and whose work abides.

In his account of John Hampden, Macaulay

quotes the account of this great English statesman, as given by his strong opponent, Lord Clarendon:

"He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion of his own with him, but a desire of information and instruction. Yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating, and, under cover of doubts, insinuating his objections, that he infused his own opinions into those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them."

And the essayist ends by saying how "England missed that sobriety, that self-command, that perfect soundness of judgment, that perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone."

Macaulay would not have ended the paragraph were he writing now, without placing a garland upon the brow of another great American, whose true stature we are at last coming as a nation to realize. Lincoln loathed the evils of slavery as much as the most fiery Abolitionist; he loved the Union with a passionate fervor; and placed at the nation's head when every energy must be shown in a struggle to save that Union, he displayed a tenacity and dauntlessness of purpose rivalling the bravest of soldiers. We marvel now at the eloquence which roused and nerved men's souls; at the wisdom which restrained the over-zealous and unwise; at the love which held out the olive

branch to the very close of his days, toward the misguided ones who wildly sought to tear to tatters the nation's flag, and whom he resisted with every force at his command.

These men exhibited statesmanship of the highest order; leadership sane and successful; qualities of character of the rarest and finest type; the very traits which the Ephesian official recognized and emphasized in the words and work of Paul and his associates in Ephesus, and to which, heathen as he was, he bore publicly his testimony.

X

THE COMMONWEALTH IDEA

The colonists on the Mayflower just before they landed at Plymouth, drew up and signed the famous compact "covenanting and combining themselves into civic body politic," which should enact such measures as should be for "the general good of the colony." A hundred and fifty years afterward the descendants of these colonists and their associates banded themselves into a confederation for the preservation and protection of their rights and mutual interests. Four score years thereafter, as Lincoln said, the citizens of this great nation engaged in a struggle, the aim and outcome of which was to preserve the Union, and government by the people for the general good. So that the great idea in the minds of the Pilgrims has been dominant in the minds of our people in all the great epochs of their national history.

The famous "general welfare" provision in the constitution of the United States is relied upon as giving authority to the general government to enact and execute laws which shall promote the best interests of all the people. And our courts in deciding questions that come before them emphasize "public policy" as a principle of justice which must be invoked to establish justice as between in-

dividuals, corporations and classes of our citizens. This at basis is the commonwealth idea.

Among the throngs who attended upon the ministry of John the Baptist were some Roman soldiers, stern, mail-clad men, the representatives of those warriors who had won and retained imperial power among men for Rome. These were roused to ask the great preacher what their duty was, and he answered: "Do violence to no man, neither exact anything wrongfully; and be content with your wages." These men were tempted to use their power for their personal advantage. John reminded them that they were to maintain government; that they were to be just themselves toward all with whom they had to do.

Today we are confronted with the clashing between capital and labor. This meets us at every turn. The wage payer and the wage earner are in a state of unrest and frequent discord, and an adjustment of these relations is seen to be imperatively necessary for the peace and welfare of society. Those words of John may well be pondered, and the right application of them sought by the people of today. The abuse of power by men of wealth, shrewd, strong and combined captains of industry and magnates in the business world, amounts to the same wrongful exaction of which those Roman soldiers were often guilty. It is perfectly plain that the representatives of the people in legislature and congress are determined to find a way to end all this, and that the way will

be found. On the other hand the failure of employees to take due care of the interests of their employer; the imperative and sometimes unreasonable demands they make; their tyrannical treatment of worthy associates who may not join their unions; their discontent with wages prompting demands unseasonably urged; all these amount to wrongful exactions for which a remedy must be found if the relations of labor and capital are to be mutually satisfactory and helpful.

What was really involved then in these words of John has been elaborately stated by the late Carroll D. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor, and his language needs frequently to be recalled, since this obviously expresses the mature convictions of one who had broadly and deeply studied the subject.

After saying that the making of character by statutory enactment; the benefit of improved sanitary conditions; the lessening of the hours of labor; action by arbitration boards had all proved beneficial but had failed to touch the root of the matter, he concludes that "in religion we find the highest form of solution yet offered."

Religion sets up a court of arbitration in a man's own heart. It bids him to remember the general good of the community in which he lives; to fit himself to render to that community some real service; thoroughly to equip himself therefor, and patiently, faithfully to engage therein; never content with his workmanship, but ever striving

to make it more perfect; considering himself as one of the indispensable factors in the social state and striving to fulfill his functions with all diligence, fidelity and honor. Whenever you find a man of that spirit you find a good citizen, for whom society has a place, and in the degree that such a spirit characterizes a people will there be a true commonwealth.

Bismarck said that the characteristic of modern civilization is the assertion of the race spirit. He saw that particularly in the union of the Germanic peoples into one German Empire, and his life work was the development of that idea among his own people. So too we now have a united Italian nation, the cordiality between the Anglo-Saxon peoples, while we watch with deepest interest the national advance of Japan, and the arousement of the Slavic race, the Chinese and the people of India.

It is becoming plain that the commonwealth idea is to take possession of men not only in local and national but also in international relations, and the mind is staggered at the many and complex problems this presents, and awed as it looks forward to the amazing results that will surely follow as men slowly and steadily work out these problems in the centuries to come.

Today the English people are dealing with the question how far the hereditary principle shall be allowed to have influence in the government of Great Britain. Of course with the history of the

English people in mind we know how that question will ultimately be decided. The people will rule. The day of the privileged classes is hastening to its close.

We remember the struggles that have taken place on British soil between Britons and Romans, Britons and Danes, Britons and Normans; between Englishmen and Irishmen, Welshmen, Scotchmen; between Englishmen themselves, and we see how slowly there has come as the result of these centuries of conflict, in which our forefathers engaged, a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and in the results of these we also share. And that history is typical of what has been and is going on within nations and between nations. The commonwealth idea is the key to human history and the interpretation of the future of the race.

A year after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth another company of Colonists came, among whom was Robert Cushman, a clergyman, and he preached there a sermon which was the first sermon ever printed in New England. That fact may show the honor in which the speaker was held and the importance recognized in the views he presented. His text was: "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." This scholarly and intelligent man saw that the idea to which Paul thus gave expression, must be supreme in the minds of the people if this new community should have prosperity and perma-

nence. With all his energy he sought to impress that upon every one.

To us the sermon was prophetic. The truth it set forth had been embodied in the compact the Pilgrims signed, and it has been the real and vital principle in every great epoch in the history of the nation then begun; it must be kept in full view in every appeal made to our people when the rights of individuals and classes are to be adjusted; and it will be found to be the last word in the Parliament of the World when the rights and interests of nations are to be determined.

This is not a counsel of perfection, the dream of a philosopher, or the Utopian fancy of an enthusiast. Christianity, which finds its utterance in Paul's word, has power to transform men; to make the sense of justice supreme in his soul; to conquer his passions, his selfishness, his prejudices and his pride; and to make him see and know, that as in the human body efficiency and welfare depend upon the healthful activity of each member thereof, so in the body politic the commonwealth idea must take possession of each individual and in the resultant general good the personal welfare is secured. The Gospel is the only power known among men which can take up this tremendous problem which confronts the modern world and solve it with ease and finality, making real man's highest ideal in the social state.

XI

VICTORY OVER VICISSITUDES

Certain characters fascinate us. Unconsciously, perhaps, but instinctively, we watch them, treasure what they say and do, and talk about them. Such a character was David, King of Israel, and we do not wonder that three prophets, Samuel, Nathan and Gad felt moved to write the story of his life and times.

It was an extraordinary career. The shepherd lad summoned from the field to meet the venerated Prophet, Samuel, was anointed as God's chosen one to wear the crown. Shortly afterward David reappears as the champion of Israel when defied and dismayed by the Philistine giant, and his victory made him the darling of the court and nation. The shepherd lad of Bethlehem became the bosom friend of the Crown Prince; the King's son-in-law, a popular officer in the royal army. Almost in an instant the scene changes, and David was an outlaw, with a price set on his head by the embittered king. Ere long he returns to Israel, first as king in Hebron, then in Jerusalem, the monarch whom a proud and powerful nation recognize as their wise and great sovereign. From the pinnacle of prosperity and power David suddenly fell into crime of deepest dye, and as a sequel the aged monarch fled from his capital in

shame and tears, hunted by the servants of his own pampered son. The story ends with the picture of a sovereign restored to his throne, to which he welcomes his son and successor of whose character and abilities the aged man was justly proud.

No wonder these eminent men of David's nation were deeply interested in this character and this career, and felt that the worthy account of it was a theme worthy of their highest powers. Homer devoted his great gifts to the story of the life of Ulysses, keenly realizing with the insight of a trained literary mind and his profound knowledge of human nature that such a story would have broad and lasting interest. The great historians and story tellers of the world have the self-same gift of insight and expression. The art of the novelist consists in inventing characters and then leading them through imaginary vicissitudes of experience, bringing out their character under such varying conditions.

Longfellow speaks of the old clock on the stair, and makes it the witness and the chronicle of vicissitudes in the home where it has so long stood. Merriment and mourning; joy and disappointment; success and failure; bridals and funerals, all these in succession that old time-piece has known. That poem appeals straight to the hearts of men, for experience brings out its deep truth. The palace and the humblest home alike know such visitations. And we note how aptly the flight of time in the poem is associated with such

changes, realizing how this thought has taken possession of men's minds. Thus in the record of David's life all was summed up in the very last line with the expression: "the times that went over him."

We recall the striking words of the Psalmist: "all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," and that psalm was written in a time of sore distress and trouble, when the heart was overwhelmed. As the heading of many chapters in the record of each life those words might fitly stand. Even more pertinently perhaps might we remember another familiar utterance: "And I said, oh that I had wings like a dove! then would I fly away and be at rest." In the one case we have the picture of a person submerged by the oncoming waves of trouble. In the other we think of him held fast and powerless to get away from his trial.

And this latter idea has peculiar significance. We speak sometimes of our ties in life; our responsibilities of home and service; the necessity of abiding in some locality where loved ones are associated with us and where our vocation is. To that spot, to that home, to that circle we are tied. No doubt great happiness and advantages come to us as a consequence. We never can do our best nor get our best unless fixed somewhere, so that we can employ our faculties steadily, make our influence continually felt, and enjoy uninterruptedly the blessings of companionship with those who are tried and true.

But this very fixedness has another aspect. Our ties tie us down. The times come when, as the Psalmist says, we long to fly away from it all; from the irritations, the anxieties, the burdens, the battling of our daily experience. And this perhaps leads us to understand the deeper meaning of that remarkable phrase: "the times that went over him."

For it brings out grandly the heroic quality of the man, who could not get away from life's harassings and battles; who was forced to stay, and who turned his troubles into triumphs of faith and patience, and transformed defeats as they seemed into real victories. In our earlier days we revel in the sense of power, and unto power we give the tribute of our heartiest praise. Longer and richer experience attests the need of endurance, patience, and we come to see that the victory of patience is as great as any ever won by man. Our eyes are at last opened to discern the ripened fruit of character in those who calmly, patiently endure life, where it holds them, making the most of all they have, serenely refusing to be cast down or embittered by denial, disappointment and grief.

That was David the King, as the Seers of Israel discerned the grandeur of his soul. Such too was Alfred the Great, King of England, that truly royal man, of feeble frame, amid a people uncultured and rude, in a time when the heathen hordes swept the land with fire and pitiless sword,

but who stood like a mighty oak defying the blasts that smote it.

And this kingliness is apparent in humble lives as well. Years ago an English lad, twelve years old, was assisting his father who was a bricklayer. While stepping from a ladder to a high roof the boy missed his footing and fell heavily on the paved court below. They picked him up, limp and lifeless as it seemed, but he revived and in time was strong again, but the accident left him entirely deaf. After a time he was apprenticed to a shoemaker, and at the bench the boy worked from six in the morning till ten at night. But the lad found time to read every book he could lay hands on. A benevolent man helped him to an education and in the end he became a person of great learning and abilities. That English lad in his humble way was as noble as Alfred, the English King.

Bunyan tells us in "Pilgrim's Progress" of the conflict with Apollyon. He describes the struggle and tells of the Christian finally flung to the ground, and losing his sword as he fell. The adversary rejoiced at assured victory and was just raising his hand to strike the fatal blow, when the man of faith suddenly seized his weapon again and cried out in the words of Scripture: "When I fall, I shall arise." And from defeat the believer snatched a decisive victory.

Sometimes we speak of "the ups and downs of life." These words in that order are not true of

the Christian life, for respecting it we properly say, "the downs and ups of life." The Holy Scriptures are full of that. At the opening of the Bible we may read of Paradise Lost, but at the end we read of Paradise Regained. Most impressive is it to note how the books of the Bible always end with the word of hope, assurance, consolation. The Book of Job is typical. Through long chapters it tells us of human misery and sorrow, but at the end we behold the faithful soul crowned with joy and blessing.

The Book of Ecclesiastes reflects the operations of the mind of man perplexed by the sorrows, uncertainties, disappointments of life. The mind is seen oscillating between doubt and hope, pessimism and optimism, but at the end comes the clear and confident word. Certainty is attained; a conclusion is reached, a philosophy of existence is found, and this doubting, questioning one is standing, not on shifting sands of mood and opinion, but on the eternal rock.

David was "the man after God's own heart" we are explicitly told. We study that wonderful career, and we see that in his strength and his weakness; in his successes and his failures; in his coronations and his degradations; with fingers that could bend the bow and anon sweep the harp string masterfully; this man essentially was as one of us. The times that went over him were like the times that go over us also. And we gaze upon the sunset hour of that strenuous life, and

behold how the deepest desires of his heart were graciously fulfilled.

Tennyson speaks of rising "on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things." His thought was based perhaps on Goethe's words: "from changes unto higher changes." The same underlying idea is voiced in the summons for the soul "to build statelier mansions for itself," and much of the noblest literature is but an expression of this aspiration and an arousing to its realization.

XII

THE SOUL'S SILENCE UNTO GOD

We declare our belief, in repeating the Apostles' Creed, that Jesus has ascended into heaven, and now sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. The language recalls the words recorded by the Psalmist-Seer, when, after his gaze into the throne-room of eternity, he says he heard the Lord say to his Lord: "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Psalm confessedly refers to the Messiah, and we have here the sublime picture of His quiet waiting, while Christianity goes on conquering and to conquer until the glories of the consummation assured.

So Isaiah chronicles a message which came to him. "The Lord said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling place; like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." The prophet realized what he would have us also realize betimes, God's quiet, assured waiting, while the agencies he had set in operation, and which were the manifestation of Himself, calmly wrought out the vast and gracious results which He had determined.

The prophet Zephaniah has a splendid passage in which he promises: "The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he

will rejoice over thee, he will be silent in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." We pause over that unique expression: "he will be silent in his love." It reveals a depth in God's love for us in a marvellous way. For love at its deepest is beyond expression by word or deed even. Beyond all we say there is more we cannot say. Beyond all we can do there is an affection which cannot find manifestation. And what we know of ourselves, this man of God with a bold and wonderful allusion, declares of the Father Himself. Even He cannot tell us, cannot show us, how dear we are to Him.

In similar way our deepest devotion unto God is beyond words or acts of expression. The Psalmist brings this out when he says: "My soul is silent unto God." There is no appeal that goes so direct to our hearts, that so haunts us, that so surely gives us no rest till we have acted with promptitude and effect, as the appeal from patient, trusting, wistful eyes. Importunate requests we may delay dealing with. Such an appeal as that moves us profoundly. Thus this man of faith was sure it was with God. The soul's silence as one looks to Him and patiently awaits His help and blessing is represented as prayer in its most touching manifestation. It means perfect trust in Him; not only in His power and wisdom and compassion, but in his full understanding and interest. He has not forgotten, and will not forget. We are silent in the knowledge of

this, and we have but to quietly watch the way in which relief and blessing shall come. We do not like to be importuned or reminded frequently, as though we had forgotten or were likely to forget. Neither does God. Never do we honor Him more than in the silent trust that He knows and will act at the right time and in the right way.

Charles Wesley composed a hymn based on Jacob's wrestling with God in prayer, and this has been called "the most celebrated lyric that he ever wrote." The transition from Jacob "the supplanter;" the shrewd, pushing, dexterous man of the world, unto Israel, "the Prince of God," is marked by the lines:

"My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see thee face to face—
I see thee face to face and live.
In vain I have nor wept and strove;
Thy nature and thy name is Love."

The elevated and serene spirit of the patriarch, who so impressed the Egyptian King and his court; who was reverenced so profoundly by those strong men his sons; and to whom was granted such marvellous visions of the future of his descendants; that was the ripe faith which in its immature manifestations we perceive in its struggle at Bethel, in the far East where he sojourned, and in the midnight wrestling in prayer at the Jabbok.

Tennyson in one famous line has sketched Mary of Bethany when he wrote: "her eyes are homes of silent prayer." That reveals to us the depth and beauty of this woman's nature, who sat at Jesus' feet, eagerly gazing into his face, drinking in his teachings,, only to rise and swiftly, surely, silently do the essential and the great thing, at which men could only marvel, in its genius and its completeness. She is the type of those silent souls, the mainspring and the mainstay of homes, and communities; who silently ponder and resolve, promptly and steadfastly act, with zeal afire but not aflame.

The Psalmist wrote this word in troublous times. In silent trust he thought of God as "his rock and his salvation." Twice he declares this in the short psalm quoted, and we think of him in that calm assurance of faith, facing difficulties and dangers which might appal. The serenity of strength is impressive, as those old Egyptian architects and sculptors have shown it marvellously, in the stately calm of the Pyramids, in which man has most closely imitated in his works the grand quiet of the everlasting hills, and in the majestic repose of their statues, which represent the King, with hands resting on his knees, and gazing out upon a world which owns his unquestioned sovereignty. Thus this silent trust of the Lord in its majestic strength, as the Psalmist depicts it, becomes a power with the timid and the terrified, to whom the calm believer alone can say: "Trust in the Lord at all times."

The telescope, through which we clearly behold and trace the stars, must not sway nor tremble. It must rest upon a foundation firm and secure. The great visions of truth come to us only in the silence of the soul. Not to Moses "mighty in words and deeds" in his hasty purpose to rescue his brethren; nor to him as the Shepherd and Lawgiver of Israel overburdened with the care of a turbulent and rebellious people; but to the man of God in the sublime and final serenity of faith came the visions of Jehovah when there was revealed before his calm gaze the panorama of Israel's future, including shadows of sins, idolatries, awful reverses and punishments at which his pious and patriotic spirit would once have been troubled and in agony, but which he now saw in the wide scope of God's eternal purpose and glory. By a natural transition we turn to the next picture given of him serene and wide-visioned as a dweller with God, when now with Elijah, like-spirited, though once so tumultuous in energy and prostrated in despair he was with the Son of Man on the Mount of Transfiguration, considering that atoning death near at hand in Jerusalem, by faith in which the true Israel of God should be rescued from the servitude of sin and enter upon the inheritance of the saints in light.

XIII

THE CITY OF THREE DIMENSIONS

Ecbatana was the capital of ancient Persia, and the city was circled by seven walls. The battlement of the outermost was white, of the second black, of the third purple, of the next blue, of the succeeding orange, while the sixth battlement was silver, and the seventh golden. And within this girdling wall on an eminence stood the royal palace. This peculiar characteristic of this city has led one to suggest that it may give us some idea of the Celestial City of which the Bible speaks, seeing in "the foundations" mentioned, terraces like the successive stages of the hill on which Ecbatana stood, and in the progressively elevated walls of precious stones, splendors like those which confronted the traveller as he approached the Persian Capital.

We read these closing chapters of God's Revelation seeking to know where and what is the place to which the righteous go, and in which the reunions of eternity occur. As we read we are perplexed. Surely this is no description of heaven like that which might be given of an earthly city. We cannot form any clear and connected idea of it. We come to feel that this language is suggestive, not descriptive; poetry and not prose. That there is an eternal abiding place of the redeemed

we may be sure; and that it will be a Paradise we may be certain. The details are not made plain. And one of the expressions used to describe it renders that certain. "The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal," we are told. "That the city lieth foursquare and the length is as large as the breadth," we can understand. An earthly city might be thus laid out. But no imaginable city ever had three equal dimensions.

This however like the other expressions met in this description, we take as illustrating a feature of the perfection which even John found it impossible to portray, or even picture to himself. But under forms of materials and measurement he thinks of Heaven as the perfect City of the Great King. Further, even he cannot go.

The Book of Revelation utilizes, combines and illustrates the symbolisms and the statements of the Bible. We must study its references if we would feel the power of John's gathering up in one grand picture the marvels of previous record with which his mind was saturated. And that is specially illustrated in this sentence of description by dimensions.

To Moses in the Mount, God gave the pattern of the Tabernacle and its equipments for worship. The innermost apartment was to be known as the Most Holy Place, and it was to be ten cubits wide, ten cubits long, and ten cubits high. In dimensions therefore it was to be a perfect cube. In

the Temple of Solomon these proportions were simply doubled, but still the length and breadth and height of the Most Holy Place were to be equal. Now John tells us that heaven, the Most Holy Place of the Universe is likewise to have three equal dimensions. In this innermost sanctuary of Israel Jehovah was thought to abide among his people, as in the Heavenly City he was portrayed as enthroned. By the perfection of dimensions in either case the perfection of the indwelling God was indicated.

Nearly a thousand years ago Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury sought to prove the existence of God because in the mind of man there is the idea of one, than whom no greater can be conceived. Since we have this idea of a perfect Being, He must really exist, this philosopher argued. Theologians of course have taken this up and discussed it, and whatever we may think of the force of his argument for the existence of God, the fact on which it rests can hardly be disputed. We have an idea of one who to us is a Perfect Being; though that idea may be very imperfect indeed. It prepares us for the revelation of the Infinite God, in the glories of his perfection, and this language of John fits in with the deepest thoughts and convictions of the mind of man.

The writings of this Apostle have been considered to afford perhaps as many proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity as any other writer of

Scripture. Men have felt that he declared clearly the existence, not only of the Father, but of Jesus, as distinct from the Father, yet equal to the Father in power and glory, a Being to whom not only honor but actual worship is due. And in his writings we read of the Holy Spirit, whom he refers to as it would seem as a Person; distinct from the Father and the Son, and rightfully to be worshipped as are they. Concededly no writer of the Bible has more profound spiritual insight than John. He seems to have been peculiarly near the Master not only in spirit but in comprehension of the deepest truth, and these threefold references to the Divine Nature to be found abundantly in his writings have led to the conviction of his belief in a Triune God, whom we know and adore as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That sublime and ceaseless chorus of praise which John says he heard in heaven: "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," is echoed in our own prized hymn:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;
God in three Persons, Blessed Trinity."

Perhaps the doctrine of the Trinity is the most profound and mysterious doctrine confronted by the intellect of man. Certainly the mind feels its finiteness speedily when it tries to grasp, and hold at once these stupendous conceptions of Deity. Yet in this very mystery those who do accept it realize their deepest and most sublime thought of

the Infinite. Paul seems to recognize a three-fold nature in man when he speaks of the body, soul and spirit, making this the three-fold division of a perfect human being. John and other writers as well, seems to recognize a three-fold nature in God, finding here the evidence and manifestation of perfect Deity. And with this appropriately we think of the three-fold dimensions of the Heaven in which the Triune God dwells.

Jehovah made his nature known to Moses in the words, which constitute the fundamental, oft- referred to, and oft-quoted revelation of Himself in Scripture. "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Here the perfection of the divine nature is by the Lord Himself declared, in the revelation of Himself as a God of law and of mercy.

In that Most Holy Place, which apparently John had in mind when he described here the Celestial City, stood the Ark of the Covenant which was the visible emblem of Jehovah's presence among his people, and enshrined at the very center of the Sanctuary.

In that Ark, divinely ordained and patterned

reposed by divine direction the two tables of stone on which the law was engraved. Beside these was the golden pot of manna, that witnessed how God's goodness would come in earthly blessings to those who kept his law; and also the rod of Aaron that budded as authenticating the priesthood whose function it was to keep that law clearly before the mind of the people. And when that law was promulgated by Jehovah, it is stated, that God spake these words "and added no more." There was nothing for even God to add. Duty to God, and duty to man was summed up in those statutes.

A sceptical lawyer once took up the Decalogue and began to read it. As he read he became more interested, and his study of it became more prolonged and profound. As the outcome he confessed his belief in God, for he declared that that code of conduct, unlike every other known, was absolutely perfect. This conclusion is reached by all who study that law and realize the fullness of its revelation of duty. We remember the Psalmist's words: "Thy law is perfect, converting the soul." The incident forcibly illustrates, what careful consideration of the ten commandments shows, the perfect nature of God as shown in His law.

On that ark was "the mercy seat." But one man, the High Priest, was permitted to approach the unvailed Ark of the Covenant, and he could come but on one day in the year, the Day of

Atonement, and even he could draw near only to sprinkle upon the mercy seat the blood of the sacrificial victim slain in connection with the solemn services of that great day. In this service the Mercy of God toward penitent and believing sinners was made known; that compassion to which he had given such varied, emphatic and reiterated expression in the opening words of his revelation on Sinai to Moses.

Thus, then, we see how the Most Holy Place was divinely constituted for the revelation of the infinite perfections of the Divine Nature with which all men are practically concerned, the God of law, and the God who can forgive those who break that law. That is the revelation of God which comes to us on Calvary, as we then discern the perfect and balanced truth which satisfies the reason and the heart; the Justice and the Mercy of the Almighty, made known in and by His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The mind demands a Sovereign of the Universe whose will is law; final and authoritative. As human government rests upon law, so must the Divine Government. Science tells us of the laws of the human body, and of the human mind and of the material universe as well. In a realm of law man lives, moves and has his being. His happiness and success and very life depend upon his due observance of law as experience and wide scientific knowledge alike attest. A Gospel then which grasps this full situation; lays hold on the

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intellect of man, and speaks with true authority, declares this reign of law, and proclaims happiness or misery to man according as he obeys or disobeys the Being who is the Author and the Personification and the Upholder of law.

Equally does the heart cherish the hope that the God of law is a God of mercy, who can and will find a way, by which the disobedient and sinful, being penitent, can escape the full and final penalty of their wrong doing. When Jonathan Edwards was preaching on the text: "Their foot shall slide in due time;" and basing upon it his terrific presentation of the remorseless certainty of punishment for sin, one of his hearers in an agony as he felt the links of that argument closing around him, arose and exclaimed: "Oh Mr. Edwards, is not God a God of mercy?" There the cry of the human heart was heard. A Perfect Being, such as we conceive God to be, must be gracious as well as just. These are the two attributes which must exist together in perfect harmony in his nature, and thus He is made known to us in the Revelation of Himself which is authoritative, because uttered in His own words to Moses, and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This celestial city of three equal dimensions, which is pictured to us then as the abode of a Perfect Being, whom we worship and adore is made known by the Apostle as the Heaven unto which God's children shall go. Language is burdened to express the blessedness which they shall there

enjoy. The Apostle uses a succession of symbolisms because a literal description could not be given by him nor to him. All the satisfactions and occupations and splendors we can think of are but mere suggestions of the reality which awaits the ransomed soul. The joys of God's redeemed ones, as inspired writers before him had described them, in glowing words with which he was familiar, the Apostle gathers up and unites in one splendid composition, and he shows us a mystery. God's own, having "attained unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," are to be with Him, in that Most Holy Place of the universe where the Perfect One abides glorious forevermore; in that City whose conformation means perfection. Its length and breadth and height are equal.

"The golden evening heightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest;
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.
But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The Saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on this way,
From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia!"

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